

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08

FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 HA-05 PC-01 /085 W

-----011678 092254Z /15

O R 092208Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6815

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANAGUA 2662

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, NU

SUBJECT: SOMOZA'S SPEECH TO CONGRESS

1. THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF CONGRESS TOOK PLACE 9 JUNE WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA DELIVERING HIS ANNUAL STATE OF THE NATION REPORT. THE SPEECH CONTAINED NO NEW OR SIGNIFICANT ITEMS. SOMOZA SAID THAT THE GON HAD PASSED THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD IN THE LAST YEAR-A PERIOD SO DIFFICULT THAT MOST GOVERNMENTS WOULD HAVE FALLEN AS A RESULT. WITH THE COLLABORATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND THE PEACE-LOVING NICARAGUAN PEOPLE, THE GON COPED WITH CUBAN-SPONSORED, OPPOSITION SUBVERSION.

2. SOMOZA WENT ON TO SAY THAT HIS HEALTH WAS GOOD AND THAT HE FELT PREPARED IN BODY AND SPIRIT TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE. THE ECONOMY, HE SAID, WAS ALSO IN GOOD HEALTH. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION HAD INCREASED AND HE OUTLINED A SERIES OF LABOR AND SOCIAL LEGISLATION PASSED DURING THE PREVIOUS CONGRESSIONAL SESSION.

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3. THE GON HAD SUFFERED OPEN PROVOCATION AND A CAMPAIGN OF DEFAMATION. CIVIL DISORDERS WERE WIDESPREAD AND LED TO THE CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION. THE NATIONAL WORK STOPPAGE HAD DONE DAMAGE. HE (SOMOZA) HAD PASSED LABOR AND OTHER REFORMS, BUT THE OPPOSITION WAS INTERESTED ONLY IN GAINING THE PRESIDENCY--NOT IN RESOLVING THE GREAT PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE.

4. DESPITE THIS, NICARAGUA'S CURRENCY REMAINED STABLE AND ITS ECONOMY, THE FREEST IN CENTRAL AMERICA. NET FOREIGN RESERVES WERE DOR-
DOBAS 611.1 MILLION AT THE END OF 1977. EXPORTS WERE UP 16 PER-
CENT ALTHOUGH THE COUNTRY HAD A NEGATIVE BALANCE OF TRADE OF DOLLARS
128 MILLION. TOTAL PUBLIC DEBT WAS CORDOBAS 4 BILLION 372 MILLION,
OF WHICH CORDOBAS 3 MILLION 518 MILLION WAS FOREIGN DEBT. (NOTE:
THESE FIGURES ARE CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN THE EMBASSY'S MOST RECENT
FIGURES. SOMOZA APPEARS TO UNDERSTATE THE DEBT BY ABOUT DOLLARS 360
MILLION BY NOT INCLUDING THE DEBTS OF AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.
END NOTE) SOMOZA ATTRIBUTED THE HEALTH OF THE ECONOMY TO AN AUS-
TERITY HE HAD IMPOSED. HE ALSO THANKED USAID AND IFIS FOR THE
VARIOUS LOANS THEY HAD MADE.

5. SOMOZA CLOSED BY AFFIRMING HIS SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND
NOTING HIS ATTENDANCE AT THE BOGOTA AND PARIS CONFERENCES IN 1948.
HE ALSO DECLARED HIS CONTINUED FAITH IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM.

6. PRIOR TO SOMOZA'S SPEECH, ARCHBISHOP OBANDO Y BRAVO DELIVERED A
BENEDICTION IN WHICH HE CALLED FOR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AN END TO VIOLENCE, AND FOR FREEDOM FOR THE CHURCH
TO PURSUE ITS SPIRITUAL GOALS.

7. THE ONLY FOREIGN COUNTRIES MENTIONED DURING SOMOZA'S SPEECH WERE
CUBAN AND COSTA RICA: CUBA FOR SUPPORTING COMMUNIST SUBVERSION,
COSTA RICA FOR HAVING ASSURED IT WOULD DO ALL POSSIBLE TO TRY TO
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CONTROL THE FSLN.

8. THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION, THE CONSERVATIVES, BOYCOTTED THE SESSION
AND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE SAYING THEY ALREADY KNEW WHAT SOMOZA WOULD
SAY, AND THAT IT WOULD BE FAR FROM NICARAGUAN REALITY.

9. COMMENT: SOMOZA DEMONSTRATED HIS PHYSICAL STAMINA DURING HIS
NEARLY TWO-HOUR SPEECH. HIS TONE WAS RELATIVELY FREE OF POLEMICS. THE
BENEDICTION OF THE ARCHBISHOP WAS ALSO MUCH LESS POLEMIC THAN LAST
YEAR. HIS CALL FOR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY IS A VERY IMPORTANT
MESSAGE DURING THIS VERY POLITICIZED PERIOD.
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